

for further examination on the merits in the present application. Applicants identify at least claims 18 and 23-27 as reading on the elected species.

The Election Requirement asserts that the application contains claims to patentably distinct species. However, MPEP § 803 states the following:

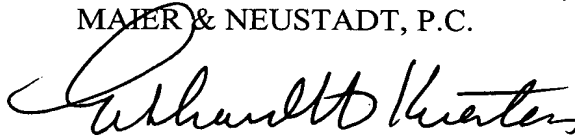
If the search and examination of an entire application can be made without serious burden, the Examiner must examine it on the merits, even though it includes claims to distinct or independent inventions.

It is believed that the claims of the present invention would have to be searched in only a small handful of sub-classes, and would in any event appear to be part of an overlapping search area. Furthermore, since electronic searching is commonly performed, a search may be made of a large number of, or theoretically all, subclasses without substantial additional effort. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully traverse the Election Requirement on the grounds that a search and examination of the entire application would not place a serious burden on the Examiner, whereas it would be a serious burden on Applicants to prosecute and maintain multiple separate applications.

Accordingly, on the basis, Applicants respectfully traverse the outstanding election requirement and request examination on the merits of each of pending Claims 1-27.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Eckhard H. Kuesters
Registration No. 28,870
Attorney of Record



22850

Tel.: (703) 413-3000

Fax: (703) 413-2220

I:\ATTY\EHK\AMEND-RESPONSES\0039\219138-ELECTION-AMT.DOC

Docket No.: 219138US2SRD

Marked-Up Copy

Serial No: 10/060,247

Amendment Filed on: May 16, 2003

IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 25. (New)

Claim 26. (New)

Claim 27. (New)